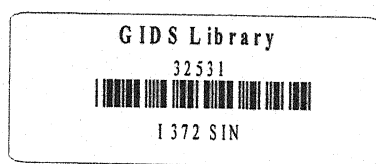


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Working Paper No. 178

HOW FUNCTIONAL ARE THE INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

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HOW FUNCTIONAL ARE THE INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

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While the New Education Policy was being drafted in 1986 the concept of District Institute of Education and Training was formulated and DIET's were established in 1987 with the aim of bringing about qualitative improvement in the level of primary education in the country. As the name itself suggests, one DIET was to be set up in each district. Soon it was felt that the DIET, by itself, was incapable of catering to the needs of the entire district. Consequently the Block Resource Centres were established at the block level and the Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centres were established at the Nyaya Panchayat level to facilitate the conduct of different training programmes and other activities of the DIET.

In this paper we are making an attempt to outline the functions of each of these three institutions as conceived of by the policy makers and to analyse briefly the extent to which they are performing their role. For this we have based our analysis on the DIET's of Hardoi and Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh and eight BRC's and thirty-two NPRC's falling under these two DIET's. We will take up our analysis of each institution individually.

DISTRICT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Among the three institutions mentioned above the DIET is the apex institution and its functions are as follows:

- (a) **Training:** The faculty of the DIET conducts training of trainers (ToT) at the district level for the first and second round of teacher training in project districts.
- (b) **Technical Support** : Since DIETs are responsible for quality aspects of the programmes, they provide support to the BRCs and NPRCs in monthly meetings and guide the agenda for activities to be followed at the BRC and NPRC level. Besides this DIETs also provide training to, and monitor work of ECCE workers and Alternative Schooling (AS) instructors.

Training is also provided by DIET to the Block Resource Groups (BRG) who, in turn, provide training to VECs.

- (c) **Feedback** : Regular feedback is obtained by DIETs in the form of completed questionnaires and report on training conducted at BRC/NPRC level. On the basis of this information DIETs prepare monthly reports for the State Project Office (SPO) and SCERT.
- (d) **Material Development**: The DIETs identify a crore group of outstanding teachers and then train them to develop district specific or locally relevant instructional material based on local facts, folklore and dialects etc. for primary classes.
- (e) **Action Research**: The staff of the DIETs is also being trained to conduct research to deal with specific problems of the district. The State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT) plays a key role in developing the capacity of the DIET to undertake action research programmes.
- (f) **Data Analysis** : Schools statistics data and micro-planning data is analyzed in the DIET to identify appropriate interventions. The DIET staff is trained in this context.
- (g) **Social Groups** : Another responsibility of the DIETs is to study the problem of special groups in the district, which require targeted intervention. DIET staff has also been sensitized to gender issues and problems associated with learning disabilities.

In order to ensure co-ordination between DIET and the educational administrative framework in the district, an Academic research Group (ARG) under the Principal of the DIET has been established in each district. The ARG plays a leading role in providing academic leadership

and co-ordination between the District Project Office (DPO) and the DIET. The ARG includes officials of DPO, representatives of BRCs, NPRCs, teachers, NGOs, educationalists and experts.

APPROVED STAFF POSITION OF THE DIET

The approved staff position for each DIET is as follows:

Principal	1	Accountant	1
Vice Principal	1	Stenographer/Clerk	1
Senior Lecturers	6	Junior Clerk	9
Lecturers	17	Lab. Assistant	2
Office Superintendent	1	Class IV (Peon, Driver, etc.)	5
Librarian	1		

Each DIET has seven academic branches. The function and structure of each branch is as follows:

- (a) Pre-Service Teacher Education (PSTE) Branch : Under this branch there are : (i) pre-service training courses for teachers of elementary schools, (ii) propagation of learner centred education and education for personality development; (iii) all matters concerning teaching methodologies are taken up; (iv) provision of psychological counselling and guidance services provided to schools; (v) matters related to learning of children of the disadvantaged group; and (vi) education of handicapped children.

The staff in this branch includes 8 lecturers, one senior lecturer and one Lab. Assistant.

- (b) Work Experience (WE) Branch: This branch identifies the work experience areas, helps educational authorities and elementary schools, NFE/AE centres in planned introduction of work experience activities. It also provides work efficiency related inputs into all other programmes and activities of the DIET.

The staff attached to this branch includes one senior lecturer, one lecturer and one work experience teacher.

- (c) The District Resource Unit (DRU) Branch : This branch assists the educational authorities in planning and co-ordination of training programmes for AE/NFE, to serve as nodal branches for organizing induction training and continuing education for instructors and supervisors, Preraks of NFE/AE, to provide instructional inputs into core areas of the main programmes, to evaluate and monitor quality and efficacy of training programmes for NFE/AE personnel, etc.

The staff handling this branch comprises of the Vice-Principal or a senior lecturer, two lecturers NFE, two lecturers AE and two clerks.

- (d) Field Interactive and Innovation Co-ordination (FIIC) Branch: This branch assists educational authorities in planning and co-ordination of in-service education programmes for elementary teachers, identifies training needs, prepares annual calendar of all programmes of the DIET, serves as a nodal branch for all action research, and publication of a periodic news-letter.

The staff in this branch includes one senior lecturer, one lecturer and one clerk.

- (e) Curriculum, Material Development and Evaluation (CMDE) Branch : Its purpose is to adopt existing items and develop new items such as curricular units, teaching learning for general as well as locally developed curricular units, develop techniques and guidelines for continuous and summative learner education, etc.

One senior lecturer and one lecturer comprise the staff of this branch.

- (f) Educational Technology (ET) Branch : The function of this branch is to develop effective and low-cost teaching aids for different subjects, help DRU in developing such aids, maintain audio-visual (AV) equipment, computer laboratory and library of the DIET, to conduct appropriate in-service programmes for teachers in the area of educational technology, etc.

This branch is headed by one senior lecturer and under him there is one lecturer and one technician.

- (g) Planning and Management (P&M) Branch : The main responsibilities of this branch are to maintain appropriate data-base for the district, to conduct studies for providing policy advice to educational planners/administrators and DBE regarding UEE/NLM, provide technical assistance to educational authorities in school mapping and micro-planning, etc.

The work of this branch is handled by one senior lecturer, one lecturer and one statistician.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES WHICH A DIET SHOULD POSSESS

There are some minimum physical resources, which must be with each DIET. If the DIET has work experience in agriculture it must have an area of 5 acres. The building must have a covered area of 600 sq.ft., which would include a Meeting Hall, Auditorium, work experience room, class rooms and rooms for the Principal and other officials. Types I to IV residences for 50 per cent officials are desirable with respect to residential accommodation. Every DIET must also have hostel for trainees with all essential facilities.

We have so far highlighted the main functions on the DIET and their staff structure etc. We will now see the actual conditions which are prevailing in the two DIET's which were selected by us to try and analyse their limitations, shortcomings and problems. Since the DIET has been entrusted with a wide range of responsibilities which is expected to be managed with the help of its seven branches, it has also been sanctioned requisite staff so that it may be able to perform these functions effectively. However, the reality, as experienced by the two DIET's is something quite contrary and both these institutions have been functioning with a staff much below the strength which has been sanctioned.

DIET Hardoi for example has only one senior lecture against the 6 positions sanctioned per DIET. Similarly there were only 11 lectures. It is the lecturers and senior lecturers who have to shoulder the responsibility of the various branches and activities. The DIET also does not have a librarian. The situation is much worse in the case of Pilibhit which has been functioning even without a regular Principal and Vice-Principal for nearly 3 years. The BSA, Pilibhit, has been holding temporary charge of the Principal. In the entire DIET there is only one senior lecturer and one lecturer. Thus the obvious conclusion which can automatically be drawn is that these DIET's are not functioning as efficiently as they should. Being the apex institution it is expected to lead by example and set standards for the BRC and NPRC. This problem is not confined to these two DIET's alone but is found all over the state as can be visualised by data presented below:

POST	Sanctioned Post	Positions Filled	Positions Vacant
Principal	56	27	29
Vice Principal	56	36	20
Senior Lecturer	336	57	279
Lecturer	952	470	482

With respect to training and workshops the relative efficiency displayed by Hardoi is better as compared to Pilibhit.

The DIET's have also been entrusted the task of undertaking some specified activities to improve the overall quality of education such as quality research and training, girl's education, science workshops and language workshops. The facts emerging from our analysis reveal that while DIET Hardoi is doing some work in these areas, Pilibhit has not been undertaking these activities.

Another important work of the diet is to supervise and assess the functioning of BRC's and NPRC's under it and once again we observe that DIET Pilibhit is not in a position to fulfil these responsibilities effectively.

The DIET's therefore feel that if they are to function properly the following aspects need to be looked into:

- (i) Each DIET must have a full staff in accordance with the positions sanctioned against each post.
- (ii) Since it is the apex body, it must have proper administrative control over the Co-ordinators of BRC & NPRC. At present this control rests with the BSA.
- (iii) That they should be given greater financial powers such as disbursing the salaries of the staff of BRC and NPRC and control of finances to conduct the training courses.
- (iv) The DIET should have the power to evaluate teachers after they complete a training course.

BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRES

In order to have a decentralized management and training structure the Block Resource Centres were established in each block of the DPEP districts to serve as the nodal points for teacher support activities. Each BRC has a staff comprising of a Co-ordinator who will be of a rank of headmaster of a primary school, as assistant co-ordinator who will be equivalent to assistant teacher of a primary school and a chawkidar/ watchman. The co-ordinators have been selected by the respective DIETs after following a detailed selection process keeping in view their leadership

potential and academic aptitude. The coordinators have been exposed to intensive training on their role, responsibilities, the management of BRCs, management of training and other academic support activities. The capacity building of the co-ordinator BRC is done through SECRT and DIET in so far as the academic aspects are concerned. The management aspects and action research capabilities are handled by SIEMAT.

The BRCs are expected to perform three different types of roles;

- (a) Academic Role : This includes : (i) building the BRC into a resource centre where books, discussion papers, etc. are available; (ii) training; (iii) providing materials; (iv) visits to schools/AS/CEEC centres; and (v) holding monthly meetings.
- (b) Planning, Organizing, Coordination and Administration : This aspect covers areas such as (i) planning and organizing training programmes, workshops, review meetings, monthly meetings at the BRC; (ii) collaborating and co-ordinating with BEO and DIET; (iii) preparing annual work plan and budget and training calendar, etc.; (iv) disbursing payments; (v) providing support to activities undertaken at NPRC level; (vi) setting up NPRCs at AS centres; (vii) co-ordinating with ECCE centres; (viii) planning environment building activities; (ix) co-ordinating with DPO.
- (c) Monitoring and Follow-up : This aspect includes things such as : (i) monitoring of NPRCs activities; (ii) collecting reports of various meetings and submitting them to the DPO; (iii) getting feedback from teachers through school visits; and (iv) attending review meetings.

The BRC co-ordinator sends the monthly reports on the functioning of the BRC to the concerned DIET. The DIET, on its part, conducts a monthly review meeting of all BRC co-ordinators and assesses their performance on the basis of specific indicators. One DIET faculty has been nominated as the mentor for each BRC to supervise, support and guide the functioning of the BRC.

Apart from conducting regular training programmes at the BRCs and providing continuous support to teachers in the area, the BRCs also arrange periodic programmes and events for schools. Each BRC prepares a calendar of activities in consultation with the staff of the DIET and the NPRCs of the area. The calendar enumerates details of monthly meetings, competitions, etc. to be taken up in the project district.

The posts of 215 BRC co-ordinators and 215 Assistant Co-ordinators were created under the project for 18 districts. Out of these the position of 214 co-ordinators and 214 assistant co-ordinators were filled in 1999-2000. Posts of additional 30 BRC co-ordinators and 30 Assistant BRC co-ordinators for the 4 new project districts have also been filled. Under DPEP-III, covering 38 districts, the posts of 426 BRC co-ordinators, 528 Assistant BRC co-ordinators and 426 posts for peons have been created.

Covering to the actual functioning of the BRC's which we selected from Hardoi and Pilibhit it was found that each BRC had around 10-11 NPRC's under it. All the BRC's had their staff of two which included one co-ordinator and an assistant co-ordinator and its own building. Despite the fact that Rs.8 lakhs has been spent on the construction of each BRC and have been constructed under the supervision of a civil engineer, the quality of construction is very poor and sub-standard material has been used. The co-ordinator was forced to take over charge of these poorly constructed BRC's by the BSA.

In order to ease the burden of the DIET the BRC's have been conducting in-serve training programmes for primary teachers which have a duration of eight days. The other training provided by BRC's is called 'Samekit' whose target group are the disabled children. The objective of this training is to train the primary teacher in such a manner that not only does she teach the children

but also removes any feeling of inferiority complex which they may suffer from by attending school with normal healthy children.

The duties of the BRC related to management information system (MIS) relates to collection of data about schools. The information collected is sent to the DIET on a monthly basis by most of the BRC's surveyed by us. While the BRC's are also expected to organise TLM fair at the BRC and NPRC level this work is being done regularly at the NPRC level by all BRC's but by some only at the BRC level. As per the procedure laid down the co-ordinators of each BRC are expected to visit the schools under them once every month but in many cases this regularity is not being maintained because they claim they have other responsibilities as well such as training. The ABSA also keeps giving the co-ordinators extra duties to perform and since the office of the BSA has both administrative and financial control, the co-ordinators have to obey the orders of the ABSA. The co-ordinators therefore feel that if proper educational support is to be provided by them the BRC should be directly under the control of the DIET.

The BRC's also have the responsibility of grading the primary schools on the basis of the check list provided by the government, formulation of work plans and to provide assistance to teachers in case they are facing any problem with respect to use of teaching and learning material. With respect to these aspects it was found that while some BRC's were functioning efficiently, there were others which are not working satisfactorily.

NYAYA PANCHAYAT RESOURCE CENTRES (NPRCs)

The third institution which was established for providing educational support to the primary schools is the NPRC. We will now focus our attention towards its responsibilities and actual functioning.

At the headquarter of each Nyaya Panchayat a Cluster Resource Centre or a Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centre has been established to cover 10-15 schools. This constitutes the hub of educational and extra-curricular activities in the area. These centres have been constructed through Community and Village Education Committee participation. The NPRC is managed by a Co-ordinator who is of the level of primary school teacher. The respective DIETs select the co-ordinators of the NPRCs through a written test, group discussion and participant observation method so that those who are ultimately selected are individuals having training aptitude as well as professional development abilities.

In the DPEP-II districts there are 2057 NPRCs. The process of filling vacancies was in progress in the concerned districts (1999-2000). For the 4 new project districts 210 NPRC co-ordinators have been appointed. Under DPEP-III, covering 38 districts, the post of 4130 NPRC co-ordinators were created.

THE MAIN ROLE OF THE NPRC CO-ORDINATOR IS AS FOLLOWS

- (a) Developing teaching learning material, holding model lesson demonstration workshops for teachers;
- (b) School visits and guidance;
- (c) Conducting academic and co-curriculum activities;
- (d) Seeking convergence, co-ordination and co-operation of local agencies at the village level;
- (e) Preparing village based education plan based on micro-planning and school mapping;
- (f) Management Information System (MIS) and information inter-change;
- (g) Holding cultural programmes to enhance community participation.

The NPRC Co-ordinators play a significant role in management of a wide variety of quality improvement interventions by sustaining follow-up, reinforcing training inputs and helping teachers overcome problems related to transacting the new teaching-learning methodologies. The

price of these produces affect the price of cane payable by the sugar mills. Higher price of cereals and other money crops give impetus to the diversion of sugarcane area to their produce. The situation obtaining in this way compels the sugar mills to pay higher prices for the created scarcity of sugarcane supply. The adverse situation leads to the diversion of food crop and other cash crop acreage to growing of cane crop. Consequently the factories may enjoy the advantageous position in getting cane at the statutory minimum price fixed by the Government. Thus the price of alternative agricultural produce has a bearing on the cane supply position and cane price. (Table 4 & 5)

The Agriculture Price Commission (APC) was set up in 1965 to advise to the Government on the price policy for agricultural commodities including sugarcane. The commission in its earlier reports on policy for sugarcane had observed that the fixation of Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) at a level lower than that recommended by the Commission not only adversely affected the supply of sugarcane but also resulted in escalating demand for sugar. Central Government fixes the sugarcane price for a sugar season on advice of CACP. There is difference between the sugarcane price recommended by Agricultural Price Commission and the price fixed by the Government during 1976-77 to 1996-97. The sugarcane price fixation based on the following four main articles (i) a minimum cane price (ii) a basic level of sugar recovery (iii) a premium for every 0.1 per cent increase in sugar recovery over the basic level and (v) the average sugar recovery of the factory during a fixed period (optimum period).

sufficient support from the BRC's. Moreover they have also complained of undue interference from the village Pradhan in purchasing and construction activities since the money given for these purposes is kept in a joint account with the Pradhan and expenditure is possible only when the Pradhan and the head teacher both sign the cheque. Even the NPRC co-ordinators feel that they should be under the direct administrative control of the DIET and BRC and that the DIET must ensure that competent persons are appointed in the BRC if their problems are to be sorted out effectively by the co-ordinator of the BRC.

We have seen the functions which the DIET, BRC and NPRC are supposed to perform with the aim of achieving qualitative improvements in the levels of primary education. A close look at their functioning reveals that all these three institutions are supposed to work in close harmony with each other and this will lead to forward and backward linkages and facilitate the educational administrative machinery in achieving its goals. However, in actual practice it is observed that each of these institutions have their own specific problems and as a consequence these linkages are not functioning effectively. It is therefore essential to ensure that the DIET should have its full staff if all the 7 branches are to function efficiently. The BRC and NPRC should have competent staff and they should be provided with all teaching and learning material and they should effectively provide educational support to the primary schools. Moreover, since the DIET has to play a crucial role along with the BRC and NPRC it is also essential that the DIET should be vested with greater financial and administrative control.

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